AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-54 (Cancelled)

Claim 55 (Currently Amended)   A voice output apparatus comprising:

a text display unit that displays operable to display a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

a delay determination unit that determines operable to determine a delay time according to a form of the text message displayed by said text display unit, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed by said text display unit; and

a voice output unit that outputs operable to output, via a voice message, the information to be transmitted, such that the output voice message represents the entire text message displayed by said text display unit, the voice message being output only when the delay time determined by said delay determination unit has passed passes after the text message is displayed by said text display unit.

Claim 56 (Currently Amended)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 55, wherein said delay determination unit is operable to:

determines determine that the delay time should be short in a case where a size of characters in the text message displayed by said text display unit is large; and

2

determines ~~determine~~ that the delay time should be long in a case where the size of the characters is small.

Claim 57 (Currently Amended)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 55, wherein said delay determination unit ~~is operable to~~:

determines ~~determine~~ that the delay time should be long in a case where a distance between a focal point and characters in the text message displayed by said text display unit is long, the focal point being set on said text display unit for attracting the user's attention; and

determines ~~determine~~ that the delay time should be short in a case where the distance is short.

Claim 58 (Currently Amended)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 55, wherein said delay time determination unit ~~is operable to~~:

determines ~~determine~~ that the delay time should be short in the a case where a contrast between a color at a position on said text display unit and a color of characters in the text message is large, such that the user's attention is drawn to the position on said text display unit as a result of the contrast ~~the position being a position, on said text display unit, onto which the user focuses their attention~~; and

determines ~~determine~~ that the delay time should be long in a case where the contrast is small.

Claim 59 (Currently Amended) The voice output apparatus according to claim 55, wherein said delay determination unit ~~is operable to~~:

determines ~~determine~~ that the delay time should be short in a case where a degree of flashing characters in the text message displayed by the text display unit is high; and

determines ~~determine~~ that the delay time should be long in a case where the degree of flashing is low.

Claim 60 (Currently Amended) The voice output apparatus according to claim 55, further comprising a personal information obtainment that obtains ~~unit operable to obtain~~ an age of the user, wherein said delay determination unit ~~is operable to~~:

determines ~~determine~~ that the delay time should be long in a case where the obtained age is high; and

determines ~~determine~~ that the delay time should be short in a case where the obtained age is low.

Claim 61 (Currently Amended) The voice output apparatus according to claim 55, further comprising a habituation specifying unit that obtains ~~operable to obtain~~ a number of times the user operates said voice output apparatus, wherein said delay determination unit ~~is operable to~~:

determines ~~determine~~ that the delay time should be short in the a case where the obtained number of operations is large; and

determines ~~determine~~ that the delay time should be long in a case where the obtained number of operations is small.

4

Claim 62 (Currently Amended) The voice output apparatus according to claim 55, further comprising a habituation specifying unit <u>that obtains</u> ~~operable to obtain~~ an operation time during which the user operates said voice output apparatus, wherein said delay determination unit ~~is operable to~~:

determines ~~determine~~ that the delay time should be short in the <u>a</u> case where the obtained operation time is long; and

determines ~~determine~~ that the delay time should be long in a case where the obtained operation time is short.

Claim 63 (Currently Amended) The voice output apparatus according to claim 57, wherein said text display unit <u>displays</u> ~~is operable to display~~ an agent as the focal point.

Claim 64 (Currently Amended) A voice output method used by an information processing apparatus to output a voice message, said voice output method comprising:

displaying, on a text display unit, a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

determining a delay time according to a form of the text message displayed in said displaying, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed in said displaying; and

outputting, via a voice message, the information to be transmitted<u>, such that the output voice message represents the entire text message displayed by the text display unit,</u> the voice

message being output only when the delay time determined in said determining has passed passes after the text message is displayed in said displaying.

Claim 65 (Previously Presented)   The voice output method according to claim 64, wherein said determining includes:

determining that the delay time should be short in a case where a size of characters in the text message displayed in said displaying is large; and

determining that the delay time should be long in a case where the size of the characters is small.

Claim 66 (Previously Presented)   The voice output method according to claim 64, wherein said determining includes:

determining that the delay time should be long in a case where a distance between a focal point and characters in the text message displayed in said displaying is long, the focal point being set on the text display unit for attracting the user's attention; and

determining that the delay time should be short in a case where the distance is short.

Claim 67 (Currently Amended) The voice output method according to claim 64,

wherein said determining includes:

determining that the delay time should be short in a case where a contrast between a color

at a position on the text display unit and a color of characters in the text message is large, such

that the user's attention is drawn to the position on the text display unit as a result of the contrast

~~the position being a position, on the text display unit, onto which the user focuses their attention~~;

and

determining that the delay time should be long in a case where the contrast is small.

Claim 68 (Previously Presented) The voice output method according to claim 64,

wherein said determining includes:

determining that the delay time should be short in a case where a degree of flashing

characters in the text message displayed in the text display unit is high; and

determining that the delay time should be long in a case where the degree of flashing is

low.

Claim 69 (Previously Presented) The voice output method according to claim 64, further

comprising obtaining an age of the user, wherein said determining includes:

determining that the delay time should be long in a case where the obtained age is high;

and

determining that the delay time should be short in a case where the obtained age is low.

7

Claim 70 (Previously Presented) The voice output method according to claim 64, further comprising obtaining a number of times the user operates the information processing apparatus, wherein said determining includes:

determining that the delay time should be short in a case where the obtained number of operations is large; and

determining that the delay time should be long in a case where the obtained number of operations is small.

Claim 71 (Previously Presented) The voice output method according to claim 64, further comprising obtaining an operation time during which the user operates the information processing apparatus, wherein said determining includes:

determining that the delay time should be short in a case where the obtained operation time is long; and

determining that the delay time should be long in a case where the obtained operation time is short.

Claim 72 (Previously Presented) The voice output method according to claim 66, wherein said displaying includes displaying an agent as the focal point.